

Coin trivia quiz: It's time to use common cents

By Roger Boye

Quick: What's a short snorter?

This coin-and-currency quiz tests your knowledge of several such hobby-related terms. Answers are printed at the end of the column, but no fair peeking until you've done your best.

1. "Whizzers" are people who [a] spend the most money at hobby shows, [b] polish coins to make them appear less worn, [c] own rarities worth more than \$10,000, or [d] cheat on their income tax returns.

2. "Chop marks" are [a] insignias of rare coin companies, [b] doubled mint marks, [c] small, punched indentations on coins, or [d] codes printed on dollar bills.

3. "Fido" refers to [a] a coin collector's best friend, [b] modern minting machines, [c] freak error coins, or [d] a dealer's assistant.

4. "Sleepers" are [a] low-mintage coins, [b] underpriced rarities, [c] buried silver, or [d] collectors after a long show.

5. "Broken bank notes" are bills [a] issued by private banks that went broke, [b] printed with damaged plates, [c] torn in half, or [d] none of those.

6. "Syngraphics" is the study of [a] money depicting lurid scenes, [b] dishonest dealers known as "coin sharks," [c] hobby-related investments, or [d] printed monetary items, such as dollar bills or stock certificates.

7. "Shinplasters" are [a] rectangular-shaped coins, [b] bills of little value, [c] injured hobbyists, or [d] medals depicting legs.

8. In coin collecting, "friction" refers to [a] tension between a collector and dealer, [b] shiny coins showing slight wear on high spots of the design, [c] washing rarities with soap and water, or [d] all of those.

9. "Mavericks" are [a] unidentified coins or tokens, [b] misprinted dollar bills, [c] single-minded collectors, or [d] wealthy dealers.

10. "Short snorters" are [a] stacks of dollar bills containing fewer bills than required, [b] collectors who are short of cash when buying rare coins, [c] bills autographed by several people, or [d] smaller-than-normal bills.

Answers:

1—B; 2—C; 3—C [the letters stand for "freaks, imperfections, defects and oddities"]; 4—B; 5—A [such bills were common in 19th-Century America]; 6—D; 7—B [experts believe the term originated during the American Revolution when soldiers used worthless bills to bandage leg wounds]; 8—B; 9—A; 10—C.